

DIABETES ALERT DAY IS MARCH 27

FRANKFORT, Ky. -(March 12, 2001) - The American Diabetes Alert - a one day call to action for people to find out if they are at risk for diabetes - is March 27 this year.

The alert is sponsored by the American Diabetes Association and is intended to inform people about the warning signs for diabetes. Diabetes can cause serious health problems if not treated. However, many people with diabetes live normal lives thanks to proper diet, exercise and medication.

An estimated 89,300 Kentuckians have diabetes and don't know it. About 6.1 percent of the state's adult population - 178,651 people - have diagnosed diabetes. Half of the adult population in Kentucky is at increased risk of undiagnosed diabetes because of age, obesity and sedentary lifestyle.

Diabetes means that a person's blood sugar is too high. It can harm your eyes, nerves and kidneys. Most people with diabetes don't notice any symptoms. However, if you have any of the following symptoms you should see your health care provider:

- Excessive thirst
- Frequent urination
- Unintentional weight loss
- Blurred vision
- Fatigue

Your risk for diabetes goes up as you get older, gain too much weight or if you don't exercise regularly. Diabetes is more common among:

- African Americans, Latinos, Native Indians, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders
- People with high blood pressure (at or above 130/85)
- People with a family history of diabetes
- Women who have had diabetes during pregnancy or those who have had a baby weighing more than nine pounds at birth

The American Diabetes Association estimates there are 5.4 million Americans who don't know they have diabetes. In Kentucky, a broad-based group of more than 100 organizations and individuals called the Kentucky Diabetes Network is working together to

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improve the treatment and outcomes for people with diabetes. The network, which was initiated by the Department for Public Health, also promotes efforts to diagnose diabetes and prevent its onset.

Dr. Rice Leach, commissioner of the Department for Public Health, urges anyone with a family history of diabetes to make every effort to maintain a normal weight, exercise moderately for at least 30 minutes three or four times a week, and to reduce the grams of fat in their diet. "The percentage of Kentuckians with diabetes is increasing because we aren't taking good care of ourselves" Leach said. "We can reverse this trend if we just change our habits."

For more information, call the American Diabetes Association's Kentucky office in Louisville at 1-888-342-2383. Information is also available at the ADA's website at: <http://www.diabetes.org/>